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ABSTRACT

A pilot study explored the disciplinary perspectives and instructional practices within English, Foreign Language, and Social Science departments in a midwestern high school to determine the degree of collaboration practised by instructors to provide interconnected cross-cultural education. Data were collected by means of interviews with and classroom observation of eight subjects teaching the following disciplines: American Literature, and World Literature, French, German, Spanish, Modern World Civilization, Anthropology, and Sociology. Results revealed that the social studies teachers have taken on the leadership role in promoting cross-cultural education from a global perspective, that the English teachers have not broadened their materials to include literature at the international level, and that the foreign language teachers emphasize language competency and proficiency while attributing a secondary role to the teaching of other cultures. Findings suggest that little interdisciplinary cooperation exists in the teaching of culture--the main barriers cited by teachers being tight teaching schedules and lack of time. (KEH)

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Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Cross-Cultural Education

by

Sibel Cakmak

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PROBLEM

Today we live in a multicultural and interdependent world community where cross-cultural understanding has become inevitable than ever before. In the literature (see Ochoa and Strasheim 1983), it is often suggested that disciplines such as Foreign Languages, English and Social Studies can cooperate to provide interconnected cross-cultural education. However, no research yet exists as to how different departments in average high schools prepare youngsters as citizens of multicultural societies and of the interconnected world community. The major issue underlying this pilot study is the role of secondary education in enhancing cross-cultural communications.

RESEARCH FOCUS

The primary focus of this pilot study was to explore the contributions of various disciplinary perspectives and instructional practices on cross-cultural education at a secondary school in the Midwest in the USA. I, thus, attempted to gain an understanding of Foreign Language, English and Social Studies teachers' viewpoints and classroom practices on the issue of teaching about other cultures, or world issues, problems and events.

(Cross-cultural education in this study encompasses the scope of courses that are either multicultural pertaining to the U.S. or international or both)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Two basic research questions were addressed by this study:

1-How do English, Foreign Language and Social Studies teachers perceive and practice cross-cultural education?

2-What are these teachers' perspectives on interdisciplinary collaboration and its role in promoting cross-cultural education?

METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed some principles of Naturalistic Inquiry Methodology (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Because a lack of research on the issue necessisated grounding theory the purpose was not to test "a priori" theory or hypothesis. Instead the findings emerged from the data to provide a contextualized theory.

PARTICIPANTS

The study was conducted with a total number of 8 voluntary teachers from the following disciplines: English (American Literature and World Literature teachers), Foreign Languages (French, German, and Spanish teachers), and Social Studies (Modern World Civilization, Anthropology and Sociology teachers).

Participant Selection Criteria

The Foreign Language teachers were the ones teaching advanced

level courses. The English and Social Studies teachers were the ones teaching 11th or 12th grade courses that focus on other cultures, or the world and related issues and events.

Participant Expectations

Prior to the study, participants signed Informed Consent Forms for the protection of their rights for anonymity, and the right to drop from the study at any time.

They were also asked to take part in final data analysis using the Teacher Reaction Reports mailed to them along with the first draft of the researcher-written report of case-studies and findings. Based on the reports received from the teachers, demanded changes and further information were included in the final draft of the report.

PROCEDURES

This research was conducted during the period May 1990 - June 1990.

Prior to official interviews, I visited the school to familiarize myself with the site and get acquainted with all the participating teachers. Later, participating teachers were interviewed and observed in their classrooms once. Yet, some teachers were contacted briefly, as required, for additional memberchecks through informal conversations.

DATA COLLECTION AND DATA ANALYSIS

Initial data collection was conducted in tandem with data analysis through memberchecks with the participants during interviews. During each interview successive more in-depth questions were based on the generated issues and themes that had particular relevance to the study. Questions for each following teacher was conducted in a serial fashion, based on data and data analysis of preceding teachers until redundancy of information was reached.

Finally, having teachers take part in final data analysis researcher-written presentation of participant viewpoints and instructional practices were verified. Reaction reports sent by teachers are also kept as data.

After data analysis, 2 major categories evolved under which case studies of teachers were organized. As shown in the report below, these categories were:

1- Teacher perspectives and practices on cross-cultural education
2- Teacher perspectives and practices on interdisciplinary work as a means for providing interconnected instruction on cross-cultural education.

I. TEACHER PERSPECTIVES AND PRACTICES ON CROSS-CULTURAL EDUCATION

Among the English, Foreign Language and Social Studies teachers, the Social Studies teachers have taken on the leadership role in promoting cross-cultural education from a global perspective. The Anthropology, the Modern World Civilization and the Sociology teachers all believe that there is

a great need for providing cross-cultural education to their students. All three teachers provide similar assumptions for educating students to gain better understanding across diverse cultures both at the national and international levels.

THE SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS

The Anthropology teacher, who also teaches US History, assumes that we live in an interdependent global community. She contends that her most important goal is to help students understand similarities between people and then the differences. In her opinion in order "to understand people you need to understand the basis of their belief system". She, therefore, helps her students to understand the reasons for conflict across cultures and conflict resolution as opposed to accepting conflict. This way her students are directed towards overcoming the concept of ethnocentrism, that is the "we're good you're bad" attitude.

Her approach is guided by three questions:
1-How did we get into this situation?
2-Why is there conflict?
3-Might we resolve the conflict today?

Her purpose in conflict resolution is to get students to think about and search for reaching peaceful solutions. For this purpose, she gives students the backgrounds of people from historical, political and religious perspectives to help them find out from where the claims of those people originate. For instance, if she wants students to understand the Moslems in the Middle East, she thinks its critical to have students understand some of the Moslem, Jewish and Christian belief patterns. By doing that she enables students to see both the commonalities of all those religions and also the differences. Once students can understand where the common patterns diverged they are better able to understand the conflict in the Middle East. She does not lecture students but encourages them to develop their opinions. Students are urged to think independently because that is what she wants them to do in the absence of any teacher when they take a newspaper and read for instance.

She uses a comparative international approach to help students understand the legitimacy of a diversity of other belief systems. Her approach is to move on from the national level, using local issues students are familiar and can identify with, to the international level. Before studying conflict-resolution in a foreign country for instance, they might look at conflict-resolution strategies concerning Black Americans at the local level. For instance, if they are looking at the Alaskan oil spill she takes them from local perspectives to the world. Students are assigned to analyze what local newspaper (Bloomington newspaper, USA Today) editorials or cartoons said on the issue. Then they look at international newspapers. The students gain different perspectives and develop their own viewpoints on the same issue.

She designs her lessons around the 4 learning styles of her students, namely: 1-concrete learners who want to observe; 2-learners that can deal with abstract data; 3-those who need to

observe and make something with the data; and 4-permanently active students. In order to enhance understanding of other cultures or belief systems, she creates a cultural environment, perhaps burning scents in class, playing international songs, and using their art as well as inviting in international speakers.

In evaluating students' understanding of cross-cultural issues she uses a variety of media as she is not a firm believer in paper and pencil. For instance, after a presentation on "Racism in Africa" students expressed their understanding through different media. Some wrote a form of jazz to express alienation which was very impressive, some wrote poems, others expressed themselves in art, while others wrote research papers.

The Modern World Civilization teacher states that the focus of his course is to help students understand that the world is a shrinking planet where the conditions that exist today affect all nations. He thinks his course is theoretically geared involving concepts of world citizenship, the shrinking planet, the meaning of globalization as well as how other cultures differ from the U.S. culture. He believes, since cultural differences exist as culture is a learned phenomenon, students need to take the time understand why other people may not do the things Americans do.

Through this course, he attempts to address the problems students have in terms of global understanding. From his experience, he thinks students are not knowledgeable enough about geographic locations within the world lack an in-depth understanding of world problems. He believes what they understand in terms of world problems or politics is basically taken from the media. He also thinks students have not been taught to see the impact of events in one country on the rest of the global community. For instance, students would not see the relationship of apartheid as a problem to the rest of the world or the US unless it directly affects their own lives.

In order to help students make better connections with world events or issues he links them to students' personal lives through simulations. One example would be the way conflict situations related to current world problems are analyzed in his classroom. They would start by discussing what causes conflict in students' personal lives. Students would be encouraged to provide personal examples of conflict, and how and why they resolved them. The message the teacher tries to get across is that people resolve conflict because communication is really needed. The next strategy he uses is to move on from illustrations at the personal level to considerations of issues and events at the international level. The readings students are assigned represent at least two contrasting viewpoints. Just like the anthropology teacher, the major goal he sets up is how best to resolve conflict in a peaceful way as opposed to violent ones. The point he makes is violent solutions affect the survival of the world as it is a shrinking planet. In a collaborative environment of discussion students are urged to reflect upon their ideas and develop their own positions. The purpose is to illustrate and guide students to

understand that peaceful solutions exist, and conflict cannot be resolved unless there is compromise, discussion and communication.

Through the shrinking planet concept, he also helps students to see that as nations of the world, we have commonalities that are cross-cultural. He wants his students to understand that, we do not have to speak the same language in order to share common needs, concerns and goals in life. He believes we also share many universal "artificial languages", such as music, art, math, and international symbols.

Just like the other two Social Studies teachers, the Sociology teacher also believes in the recognition for the diversity of cultural perspectives. The following statement clarifies his position, "If you don't show students that there are multiple choices and rights, they'll walk away with 'our way is the only right way'".

He believes in the value of cross-cultural education, at the international level, for the economic re-empowerment of the US within the world community. He sees US not in the same power position as it used to be. The solution, he believes, is for Americans to find innovative ways to better understand and communicate with other cultures. He criticizes US for isolating itself and Americans for thinking that they do not need to understand and communicate with other people. He therefore thinks cross-cultural education is needed for better understanding the countries with which the US is in contact. Expecting everyone to speak English, rather than communicating with people in their own languages, such as Japanese or Russian, would not benefit the US. Requiring at least two foreign languages beginning from grade school is one of the innovations he visualizes. He thinks it is a gross error that young children are not taught foreign languages.

His practical perspective on providing cross-cultural education in the classroom is based on the nature of cross-cultural attitudes & experiences of his students. Among his American students there are two groups. One group tends to be cosmopolitan who either have travelled overseas or have parents at Indiana University which has an international population. The other group of students tend to be extremely conservative and fearful of foreigners. The reason is they have not had experiences outside their local communities.

In order to help students overcome their fears of foreigners and understand them, he tries to make people from other areas or cultures as real as possible. He uses film strips, human resources including students and outside speakers current sources from magazines and employs values clarification as an exercise. For instance, he uses a cross-cultural approach when working with the unit on family. He uses film strips to show families all around the world. This way, he thinks students reach an understanding that the concept of the family is the same all around the world even if traditions change. The sociology text he

uses is The Study of Human Relationships by Thomas & Anderson. Besides, he uses many outside handouts and books the students choose from the library and review.

Besides inviting outside speakers, he frequently uses cosmopolitan students as human resources for enhancing cross-cultural understanding in his classes. He uses the idea of 1) visitors (foreign students) and 2) travellers (American students that have travelled overseas). When the theme was "stratification in the society", he had a student from India provide information on the cast system and how it worked in their country. Travellers would also be asked to provide information about other cultures, what affected them, the cultural differences they had seen and where and why the US culture did not fit.

One exercise he uses for intervening in the hostile attitudes of some students towards other cultures is values clarification. He finds it useful to stop students and get them to reflect upon and examine the reasons behind what they say or think about other people.

THE ENGLISH TEACHERS

The two English teachers, that is, the American Literature teacher and the World Literature teacher, have diverse perspectives on the issue of cross-cultural education.
One commonality that they have is, that both are informed about the availability of non-Western or Third World literature and the resource person that can provide such material. However, neither the World Literature teacher nor the American Literature teacher have broadened their materials to include literature at the international level. They have different perspectives on this issue.

The American Literature teacher provides cross-cultural education at the multicultural level pertaining to US. Just like the Social Studies teachers, she promotes understanding of the diversity of cultures but only at the national level. Although she is not using literature at the international level, she believes that is the direction that should be taken by the department. Indeed, she mentioned the English and the Language Arts department is undergoing review of their curriculum and that some attention has been directed towards Third World Literature. Most of the teachers have little background in that kind of literature due to their college education that focused on Western literature. Yet she believes teachers would not need very specialized training for using non-Western literature. She thinks teachers' expertise with literary works would be sufficient for enabling them to use international literature by reading about the backgrounds of the authors. She also thinks the English curriculum at the university level should also be innovated to include international literature.

She uses multicultural literature. Her goal is to insure that through American literature voices of all cultures in the US are

heard. She believes US is a multicultural, culturally heterogeneous society and American literature is a means for reflecting that. Through multicultural literature, she helps students understand minorities' concerns and conflicts they face in trying to establish a balance between their own and the mainstream American culture.

In her literature class she uses works, such as Grapes of Wrath by Steinbeck, The Great Gatsby by F. S. Fitzgerald, I Heard the Owl Call My Name by Margaret Craven, and My Antonin by Willa Cather. She also incorporates works by minorities. She uses works by Jewish authors, such as Bernard Mallamaud and Isaac Singer who talk about the Jewish people and the immigrant experience. She also uses works by Black authors, one of which is called A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry. She also uses miscellaneous writings by American Indian writers. Among her selections are different variety of works including selections of poetry, short stories by Alice Walker, plays such as the Native Sun and exercpts from the American Indian writer William Least Heat Moon's autobiographical tour of America, called the Blue Highways. Among her miscellaneous short selections are works by Richard Rodriguez, Alice Walker, Scott Momadey, Maxine Hong Kingston and James Baldwin. Her material selection is based on creating textsets. She would have a relatively longer work at the center which would be the core text supported by shorter workd on the related theme. All these shorter pieces would be of varying difficulty. Some students who do not have the patience or interest for reading longer works would still have access to ideas and participate in discussions.

To restate her broadest goal is "to see that what we call American literature is really a chorus of voices from all cultures that make our literature and culture unique". The way she evaluates her broadest goal occurs in a variety of forms usually with emphasis on synthesis. Sometimes students have a test provided at the end of each unit, frequently some kind of presentation. Sometimes it is done through writing that demonstrates students' understanding of the literature and the relationships that surface across different works. The end of the year final exam situations also serve evalustion or students are asked to write self-evaluations. The self evaluations focus on what they learned about American culture reflected in the literature of the cultures that they have read during the semester. When she gives her students synthesis opportunities, she gets wonderful responses even from her general students.

One example of a synthesis exercise would be when they finished the unit on American Indians. Students were asked to simulate the roles of certain characters in the works they read and to imagine that they were at a symposium. The students were asked to develop a script that would take place at the symposium on the problems of minority members of this country. The students had done a great presentation demonstrating that they could synthesize the different perspectives, see the relationships and understand the points of agreement and disagreement among simulated characters.

The World Literature teacher states that the title of his course might be misleading. The reason he gives for using this title is that 5 or 6 years ago the State Booard of Education mandated them to choose from among a list of titles. He found World Literature to be the most appropriate title among the ones offered.

He clarifies that the content and the purpose of his course are not intended for either international literature or for cross-cultural education. Instead he uses Western literature for helping students understand and relate to themselves universal human concerns. He therefore organizes his course around issues on human themes. Among the works he uses are the following: Oedipus, Candide, Madame Bovary, and King Lear. He believes these are still great works of literature in terms of enabling people to identify with the themes they provide. Classes would be centered around discussion of these works and student would be assigned papers for literary criticism.

As for using Third World or non-Western literature he admits he is ill-prepared. He thinks in-service training may be necessary because he had not received such exposure from the English department in college.

THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS

All three Foreign Language teachers come to a consensus on the philosophy of their department. The major goal in the Foreign Language department is to teach language competency and proficiency. Teaching about other cultures is secondary. Evaluations thus focus on testing only language proficiency but not cultural competency. They believe it is primarily the responsibility of the Social Studies teachers to teach about cultures or global events or issues.

The French teacher states that their goal as a Foreign Language department is to teach the target language. However, he strongly believes that, the French heritage is so richly engrained in literature and history that there is much content to teach. He thinks the French Civilization and culture, such as Renaissance and the Great works have had a great impact on the world.

Consistent with his position, in his advanced level course, he teaches basic French history including important moments and events. Among the set of readings he emphasizes are classics from French literature, such as works by Rousseau, Montaigne, Voltaire, La Fontaine and Moliere. He puts more emphasis on history and the French classics than on current events and contemporary literature. The reason he explains is because one area US students are extremely weak is history and geography. In his opinion, the contemporary events questions the students get today cannot be answered without historical foundation.

As for developing language skills, he uses innovative ideas. Students get credit each week on the condition that they speak in French outside the classroom with a friend or a native french speaker. They would go to a French movie and discuss it

afterwards or maybe talk on the phone. It is a pactice based on teacher-student trust.

The Spanish teacher is an extremely strong believer in language proficiency as the major goal of the Foreign Language department. He states anything else they do in class that contributes to language proficiency is secondary. Primarily he works on developing students' vocabulary, grammar and speaking skills. Although he uses current events and teaches about the history of Spain or Latin American countries his purpose is not educative. His objective is not for guiding students for developing positions on cross-cultural events or issues. He thinks students may pick up some information but all he intends to provide is the usage of the foreign language in different situations.

However, he is the most popular foreign language teacher in using current events articles. Everyday he can get news about the world in Spanish through electronic media.

The reason he uses current events is primarily because they are wonderful sources of useful and contemporary vocabulary. He thinks because similar incidents occur over the years vocabulary learning is reinforced each year. He also thinks if students are ever going to use the language for any practical reason, they are most likely to read newspapers, watch news on TV or listen to news reports on the radio. Unlike the French teacher, he is against using literature at the high school level because the vocabulary would not be useful for practical purposes. The approach he uses with current events or with any other reading material is grammar translation and the audio-lingual method. Once students are assigned current events articles they prepare lists of unknown words with English translations in dictionary format. Then they read the text in class for pronunciation. Secondly, they will translate the text into English to make sure everybody understands it in English. Finally, students may get a vocabulary quiz. Another exercise he would do with 3rd and 4th year students is dictation to give them a real practice in associating the written language with what their ears hear.

In the advanced Spanish class one of the things they do is to read about the history. They study the history of Spain from 1492 up to 1558 and some European history, as it relates to Spain and the conquest. They also study the conquest of Mexico and Peru.

In terms of cultural differences, he mentions about them as they come up in conversations but not in a pre-planned way. For instance, he would teach students what not to say for smooth personal relationships.

The German teacher sets the following goals for her advanced German class: to understand native speakers and to respond; to read an article and understand; to read a newspaper; and to be familiar with modern culture and some old culture. As the rest of the foreign language teachers she states that her overall goal is developing students language skills, especially speaking. Whatever she does related to culture is secondary.

She develops her lessons around themes given in the textbook. With her first year students she uses themes, such as family life, holidays, table manners and behavior in the German culture. She integrates an interdisciplinary approach to the content of her lessons. With her second year students she uses fairy tales, zagas, and teaches them about geographic locations in Germany. During the third year she incorporates history, art and literature (e.g. short stories) using the materials she finds from library search.

Current events are also popular in her classes although not as frequently as the Spanish teacher would use them. She shows her adnvanced students monthly films on current events (Monatsspiegehl) that she obtains from the German Cultural Center. She sometimes brings in extracts from newspapers. Yet every morning assuming they skimmed through the newspaper she opens up discussion about "What's new in the World?". Yet the idea is not for students to learn about current events or develop opinions about them. The overriding purpose for incorporating current events is for students to practice the German language and to become more fluent speakers.

The reason she incorporates history, geographic locations and current events is because she thinks students need also be educated. Especially, they should know about the country of the language they are learning. She thinks her students do not have enough knowledge about geographic locations, history... etc. and yet they reject to be educated about those aspects of the language.

II. TEACHER PERSPECTIVES AND PRACTICES ON INTERDISCIPLINARY WORK

THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS

The French teacher, who is also the department chair, is very excited about the idea of interdisciplinary cooperation. As the coach of the DeCathlon team he has had experience in interdisciplinary work. However, he thinks implementing a permament interdisciplinary cooperation among teachers would be very problematic within the currently working school system. First of all, due to scheduling the curriculum is very restrictive. Secondly, teachers neither have common preparation times nor extra free time for collaborating with their other colleagues.

His philosophic stance for implementing an interdisciplinary curriculum reveals his theory on learning. He perceives all areas of learning as interconnected parts of a whole. He is not satisfied with departmentalization which he believes does not help students make connections across learnings. Departmentalization, he thinks, does not permit students to see learning as a whole or to implement what they learn to life as a whole. He regrets that all different subjects, such as, history, art, science...etc, are taught disconnected from each other as opposed to what we would encounter in real life.

One idea he proposes for interdisciplinary work is to study

different subjects through time periods. For instance, studying the 1920s would require learning about different areas (music, art, history, science...) by a team-taught approach.

The Spanish teacher has not been involved in any formally or informally established interdisciplinary work. He does, however, exchange ideas through informal conversations with his colleagues in other departments about interrelated subjects they teach.
He supports interdisciplinary cooperation provided favorable conditions, such as time and funding, are met. Such a program can be offered if there is also demand for it in terms of student interest.

He predicts some other problems related to initiating interdisciplinary work at BHSN. He thinks conflict of student schedules might diminish number of interested students and consequently teacher availibility due to small class size.

In terms of where FLs fit into interdisciplinary work he does not differ from the French teacher. He supports interdisciplinary work where the FLs would be the medium for teaching certain courses for improving language competency and fluency. He suggests that one of the history courses could be taught in a foreign language for students in the advanced classes. An example he gives is, the Spanish/French teacher and the World Civilization teacher working together and team-teaching two days a week. His example is consistent with his past personal educational experiences. Many years ago while studying at Indiana university he had taken a history course offered in the Spanish language. He is also informed about the FL schools in Lima, Peru where he spent some time. In those schools, such as American, British, German and French part of the day the courses would be taught in that particular foreign language.

The German teacher is not so optimistic about the possibility of interdisciplinary cooperation. She says the school does not provide any time for such work and that there is no such plan.

The following are the couses that she believes would contribute to FL learning: World History, English Literature, World Literature, Art History, Music and World Geography. For instance, through English literature students learn translations of German novels, Art History gives them access to German Art, and in their Music lessons students learn to sing German songs. When her students learn some German Christmas Carols they ask the meanings of those to their German teacher.

THE ENGLISH TEACHERS

The American Literature teacher thinks interdisciplinary cooperation is an important direction that needs to be considered. She sees cooperation with the Social Studies department as the starting point for such work. In her opinion the Social Studies department can provide a cross-cultural education perspective to other courses with its rich global perspective and education on global understanding. She also

visualizes cooperating with the Science and Foreign language departments which means an across-the-curriculum cooperation.

Based on her readings of the literature, she knows that in some school programs interdisciplinary learning works effectively as a problem solving approach to students who are no longer interested in learning. Just like the anthropology, the social studies teachers and the French teacher she believes learning as a process of making connections is lacking in their school. She is also a believer in the learning theory like the anthropology and the sociology teachers. She thinks the kind of fragmented education students receive is because students are not given time to interconnect their courses. That is why students cannot receive support from teachers in making connections across their different courses.

However, she thinks interdisciplinary cooperation is not the primary concern in their school today. In her opinion, if any changes will take place in this direction for restructuring the curriculum it will take 5 or 6 years. She believes provision of release time for teachers, funding, leadership and some vision are essential driving forces for interdisciplinary cooperation.

THE SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS

The Anthropology teacher is the most enthusiastic teacher for interdisciplinary cooperation. She has worked on the informal interdisciplinary committee that was established in their school this year. Although they wrote a grant for professionalizing the committe they did not get any funding. Currently the following people are memmbers of the committee: 2 teachers from the Social Studies department including herself; 1 teacher from Fine Arts; 1 English teacher and the librarian. Based on the learning theory, the committee was set up to provide more interconnected learning to students.

From her perspective, in the 1990s when students cannot find any interrelatedness across their courses they tend to lose interest in learning. In her opinion, if the world is interconnected then the curriculum should also be interrelated. Her viewpoint is consistent with that of the French teacher. Just like the French teacher, she thinks interdisciplinary learning can also be a challenge for breaking the boundaries between college and non-college bound students.

She and the sociology teacher have observed 2 groups of teacher philosophies that have also played role in the committee:

1- those teachers who believe in changing their teaching and learning approaches based on current research and theories

2- those teachers who are reluctant to change and insistent upon giving the type of education they received in their college years 20 years ago

She believes time release for teachers to cooperate and funding to professionalize the committee are essential for interdisciplinary cooperation to work. Once the committe becomes proffesionalized at least committed teachers can demonstrate its

benefits to students and attract more teachers. This way they can also get support from the administrators.

She suggests a thematic approach to interdisciplinary learning. The example below that was implemented demostrates coordinated learning based on a single theme:

The teachers on the informal interdisciplinary committee once came up with this theme: Biological and Behavioral Evolution of Man. The question they asked themselves was: What relevance does that have to the 21st Century?. Their response was: A group of people entering the 21st Century would face alienation, racism or unequitable treatement. Each teacher contributed to the theme in their classrooms as summarized below:

1- Anthropology: This teacher worked on this topic: In the beginning people were treated equally. But later artificially through social institutions the behavioral treatment of man towards biologically different some groups of people changed.

2-English: The American Literature teacher worked with authors who addressed the alienation and concerns of minority groups, such as Jews, blacks and Hispanics.

3-Art: This teacher presented artists that portrayed the desperate positions of some minorities, such as blacks and american Indians.

4-Music: Jazz was used and analyzed as representing a cry for alienation.

The Modern World Civilization teacher is also pro interdisciplinary cooperation. To realize such work he believes the school should provide more time as well as common preparation time for teachers. In his opinion, the following departments: Art, Foreign Languages, and sociology, psychology, anthropology would contribute to better understanding of his course, Modern World Civilization. He thinks, cooperation with those departments would depend on themes and pragmatics.

The Sociology teacher argues that interdisciplinary cooperation is necessary for students to be able to make connections across their learnings. He thinks what excites students about education at the primary grades is that all subjects are interconnected. Children can make sense of their learnings in a wholistic meaningful way. He believes beyond that level up until secondary school students tend to lose interest in certain subjects. The major reason, he thinks, is because students cannot make sense out of disintegrated subjects, unsure of what purpose they would serve.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

1- Social Studies teachers are enthusiastic about cross-cultural education at the global level, that is both at the national

and international levels. In order to promote cross-cultural understanding and to help students develop viewpoints on cross-cultural issues, they incorporate a global perspective into their courses.

2- The overriding goal of the Foreign Language teachers is language proficiency. They are concerned about enhancing their students vocabulary, grammar and speaking skills. The cultural component of their courses, including current events receives secondary emphasis. The cultural component is not specifically intended for educative purposes and is not used for encouraging students to develop viewpoints on cross-cultural issues or events.

3- The Foreign Language teachers believe it is the responsibility of the Social Studies department to teach culture. Social Studies teachers argue what they do on culture is not enough and believe Foreign language teachers need to teach more about culture.

4- The American literature teacher uses multicultural literature to enhance students' cross-cultural understanding of the US cultures. The World Literature teacher at least promotes understanding of universal human concerns from the Western perspective. He does not use Third World or International English literature. He states his goal is not intended for cross-cultural education or for developing international perspectives.

5- All teachers support interdisciplinary cooperation and see important benefits for students. Students can make connections across their courses and become more interested in learning. For such cooperation restructuring of the curriculum is necessary. Release time for teachers and funding are essential for teachers to cooperate.

6- The other teachers visualize interdisciplinary programs across the curriculum or related courses. Foreign Language teachers do not see Foreign Languages fit into an interdisciplinary program unless the medium of instruction for some related courses is in a foreign language. They think such a program would be an opportunity for some interested students to improve their language skills.

7- Interdisciplinary cooperation in English or in the Foreign Languages can also contribute to cross-cultural education if based on a thematic or a time-period approach.

8- The departments are on the one hand departmentalized and disconnected because they do not cooperate. On the other hand, there are interdisciplinary overlaps between especially the Social Studies and the English departments in terms of

certain content and approaches used by some teachers.

9- Based on my classroom observations of teachers, their classroom practices on cross-cultural education have been consistent with the viewpoints they expressed during our interviews.

INTERPRETATIONS AND CONCLUSION

In this particular high school context, the Social Studies teachers have taken on the leadership role in providing cross-cultural education at the international level. Their teaching philosophies are based on the interdependence of nations in our contemporary world. They recognize cultural diversity in our multicultural world and in their teachings emphasize the value of conflict resolution for enhancing cross-cultural communications. The instructional media and the strategies they employ provide educational experiences for students to develop critical and independent thinking on cross-cultural issues. My classroom observations have also shown that teaching strategies such as collaborative discussions, simulations, role play, and values clarification are crucial for overcoming negative stereotypes. These strategies act as effective tools for developing independent judgements about other cultures and cross-cultural issues. The teachers help students to gain a better understanding of both human universals and cross-cultural differences through engagements in a diversity of cultural perspectives, including their own.

Despite their knowledge about the availability of international literary materials written in English, the English teachers use multicultural or Western-oriented literature. The cross-cultural scope of the American literature course seems to be in place since the focus is on the American society. As the American literature teacher contends, one important element of multicultural literature is that it reflects the pluralistic nature of the American society and legitimizes the existence and differences of diverse ethnic groups (Pugh and Garcia, 1990; Alex, 1989). The American literature and Social Studies courses are different in terms of cross-cultural scope, the former being multicultural and the latter international. Yet important interconnections do exist among them in terms of enhancing cross-cultural understanding. Be at the national or international level, one interconnection is that these courses recognize the legitimacy of cultural diversity and the need for cross-cultural understanding. Thus teachers guide students to go beyond their monocultural perspectives and to also see through other cultural perspectives. Secondly, there is overlap in teaching strategies such as simulations, role play, values clarification or self analysis. These teaching strategies or techniques are crucial for helping students to understand other cultures from the standpoints of those cultures (O'Connor, 1980).

The World literature teacher limits the cultural scope of his

course to Western literature contradicting what the name of the course implies. However, today international use of English in non-Western countries has also led to production of literatures written in English in various parts of the non-western world. With paperback explosion novels, short stories, plays and poetry from diverse cultures of Asia, Africa and the Carribbean have increased in number (Kachru 1988; Spooner 1987; Kachru 1983). Although written in English these works are valuable in conveying concerns, values and issues from their native cultural contexts. Acknowledging the legitimacy of literature in these Englishes can help break through monocultural curricula. Non-western literature coupled with Western literature can enhance students' cross-cultural understanding. Thus World Literature, in this sense, can also support the Social Studies courses that may emphasize global problems which seem depressing, dehumanizing and overwhelming. These international works can make global issues more tolerable, appealing and exciting through personal and psychological insights into not only political and economic questions, but also into social life (O'Connor, 1980).

The major goal of the Foreign Language department is language proficiency. As Steele (1990) puts it, in this department, "culture is seen as peripheral, not central to the understanding of" foreign languages (p. 1 and 4). Therefore, students are not tested on culture either but only on their knowledge of the language. This department's foreign language philosophy thus contradicts the growing consensus on the notion that students can communicate competently with speakers of a foreign language only if they understand the culture(s) in which it is used (Steele, 1990; Byram 1988; Strasheim 1981). Even when cross-cultural materials are incorporated into these foreign language classrooms the missing element is the educational aspect. That is, unlike in the Social Studies and English courses, students are not encouraged to develop opinions on presented issues because the focus is not on idea content but on the language, i.e. grammar and vocabulary. For instance just like in a Social Studies course current cross-cultural events are incorporated into the Foreign Language classroom. But breakdown occurs between the two disciplines when students are only asked to give oral reports on news or merely to translate written current events reports obtained daily from electronic media at school or extracted from newspapers. Information sharing excludes discussion aimed at educating students cross-culturally as the objective is only language practice. Again when literature is used, grammar-translation and vocabulary development exercises are emphasized because teachers see development of language skills central to successful language use. However, in foreign language instruction "focusing on form (through grammar translation exercises) rather than on meaning (through communicative activities), students are learning about the language rather than how to use the language for communication" (Steele, 1990, p. 1 and 4).

If cross-cultural education is also to be integrated into these advanced Foreign Language classrooms and if foreign languages are

to provide support to understanding diverse cross-cultural perspectives presented in social studies courses certain changes are deemed essential. The needed changes, I propose, to be considered by the foreign language teachers are as follows:

@Setting goals and evaluation criteria for cross-cultural understanding as well as for language proficiency
@Engaging students in interactive reading focused on idea content, instead of grammar-translation, to generate writing experiences and discussion and to promote independent thinking skills as well as language proficiency
@Providing more educationally enriching cross-cultural experiences to students through activities such as simulation and role play to help them understand other cultural perspectives. Helping students to overcome negative stereotypes about the foreign culture(s) is essential for increasing students' interest in that foreign language.
@Just like in World Literature course, teaching about French-, German-, and Spanish-speaking worlds, not just a single focal country to open possibilities for students to use their foreign language effectively with native speakers from different cultures. Conversations with the French and the Spanish teacher, for instance, revealed that some of their students go for a visit or study not only in France or Spain but also in other countries speaking those languages.

This study shows that ideally cross-cultural education in this context could be enhanced had disciplinary cooperation existed among English, Foreign language and Social Studies departments. The most common barriers for interdisciplinary instruction often cited by teachers in the literature (Strasheim, 1980) and by the studied teachers are lack of free time due to tight teaching schedules. Understandably these are legitimate reasons for regular cooperation among teachers. However, the cited barriers become groundless excuses since the Social Studies teachers and the American Literature teacher can go beyond monoculturalism. Their educational philosophies enable them to implement international or multicultural education that match the realities of the world or of the American society. Indeed, the problem is disconnected support and instruction from the three disciplines to cross-cultural education. Departmental boundaries and departmental philosophies on cross-cultural education seem to perpetuate this tendency. However, if not interdisciplinary cooperation, the most reasonable solution for interconnected cross-cultural education in this context is for language departments to revise their educational philosophies and to broaden their cross-cultural goals and instructional strategies also. Through this approach, instruction in language and social studies departments will be more connected also meeting the demands of our increasingly interdependent world. Also as emphasized by most teachers in the study, interconnected learning

can provide a more meaningful, holistic and exciting education for students.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This pilot research studied the multidisciplinary implementation of cross-cultural education and the existing connections among disciplines only from teachers' perspectives. Considering at least the minimal connections that exist among the three disciplines, further research is needed to explore what connections students establish among the three disciplines with regards to cross-cultural education. In turn, connections between teachers' and students' perspectives will provide a more holistic understanding regarding the practice of cross-cultural education within this average high school context.

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